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Appl. No. 09/595,420***Remarks***

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-25 and 27-35 are pending in the application, with 1 and 14 being the independent claims. Claim 26 is sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner, in a telephone conference with Applicants' undersigned representative, requested that the Specification be amended to add the appropriate trademark information regarding the use of the term Teflon. The paragraph in the specification at page 15, line 15 has been amended accordingly.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants have canceled claim 26 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. As such, the rejection has been rendered moot. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

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Appl. No. 09/595,420***Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102***

The Examiner rejected claims 1-36 (*sic*, 1-35) under 35 U.S.C. §102(f) because "[t]he invention claimed in this application is fully encompassed by the specification and claims of a previously submitted application, 09/598968." Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's mischaracterization of the Berndt '968 application as "a previously submitted application."

As detailed more specifically in the Supplemental Request for Interference, submitted herewith, the Berndt '968 application was filed on June 22, 2000, a week after the filing of the present application. Further, both the present application and the Berndt '968 application claim priority to applications that were on the same priority date. In particular, the present application claims the benefit of a provisional application filed on June 22, 1999, and the Berndt '968 application claims priority to a German patent application filed on June 22, 1999. As such, there are no facts supporting the Examiner's position that the Berndt '968 application was submitted prior to the present application.

Further, on July 31, 2003, Applicants filed a Declaration by Colin B. Kennedy, one of the listed inventors, that should have been sufficient to overcome the § 102(f) rejection. Upon information and belief, Applicants understand that the claims of the Berndt '968 application have been amended to avoid interfering with the claims of the present application. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Non-Statutory Double Patenting

The Examiner provisionally rejected claims 1-36 (*sic*, 1-35) under the judicially-created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 and 18-25 of the co-pending Berndt '968 application. Applicants previously

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requested that this issue should be brought before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences to be decided in an interference. Upon information and belief, Applicants now understand that the claims of the Berndt '968 application have been amended to avoid interfering with the claims of the present application. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

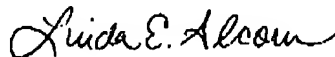
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Linda E. Alcorn
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 39,588

Date: March 9, 2004
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600
233623v1